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## Long time coming down

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BUXTON - Four years ago, Linda Emery stood in the town hall at a meeting she organized, and pleaded for selectmen, the state Department of Environmental Protection - anyone - to tear down the dangerous, ugly and environmentally hazardous abandoned Rogers Fibre Mill.

Thursday night she sat with a small audience in the same meeting room, beaming as she listened to officials and contractors with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency explain how they will tear down the building starting next week.

"It's like 'mission accomplished' after all that fighting we did," Emery said after the informational meeting. "We never lost hope."

The mill has been empty since the early 1980s. Large sections of roof have collapsed. Parts of the building fell into the Saco River over the last two winters. Emery, who lives across the street, worried because children occasionally play in the dilapidated building and she feared for their safety.

Prospects for demolishing the mill appeared slim for years as selectmen sought state help and to force the owner, Pat Canonica of Boxford, Mass., to do it himself.

A dozen local residents attended Thursday's meeting, hoping to get a sense of how the EPA will remove hazardous asbestos and other materials, and what the agency will leave behind when it finishes the job.

"What will the site look like when you're done?" asked Paul Mattor of Hollis, who swam in the river when he was a child.

Janice Tsang, the on-site coordinator for the EPA, assured him

the agency won't take away the hazardous materials and leave a gaping hole in the ground. But it won't turn the area into a park, either.

Tsang said the project is more complex than she and others involved in it originally anticipated. She said contractors will work in two phases. In the first, they will remove the wood and masonry structure down to the level of the adjacent Central Maine Power dam.

Then engineers will determine the condition of the mill's substructure, and how much of it needs to remain in order to protect the dam from collapse.

The project already has been approved for \$960,000, and Tsang said the process allows for more money to be spent if additional work is needed.

For Emery, the arrival of demolition crews on Monday will be sweet. "It's like a dream come true after all that," she said.

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